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Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Chad

Summary

The present report has been prepared within the framework of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). It is the third report on the situation of children and armed conflict in Chad submitted to the Council and its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, covering the period from July 2008 to December 2010. The report follows my second report (S/2008/532) and the subsequent conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (S/AC.51/2008/15).

The report presents an overview of the general situation in Chad in the context of armed conflict. It highlights how the state of insecurity in the eastern region that prevailed in 2008 and 2009 improved markedly in 2010, and the impact that this evolution has had on efforts to protect children. The May 2009 clashes between Government forces and the Union des forces de la résistance (UFR) took place in the context of an already volatile political, military and security situation in eastern Chad, leading to grave violations against children. Subsequent progress in the relations between Chad and the Sudan from mid-2009 onwards resulted in the thawing of political tensions. This allowed for operational military arrangements, such as the establishment of a Chad-Sudan joint border force in April 2010, which, together with the improved operational capacity of the Détachement intégré de sécurité, had a positive impact on the security situation and the protection of children.

The report concludes that recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups was still an ongoing phenomenon during the period under review. However, it also notes a large number of cases of children who returned or were released from various armed groups. Children continued to be targets of sexual and gender-based violence, and there remains a considerable danger of mines and other explosive remnants of war. The report also indicates that attacks on humanitarian workers in eastern Chad on many occasions adversely impacted children's access to humanitarian aid, including education and health care.

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The report further accounts for the programmatic efforts put in place by various stakeholders, including the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations, to address violations against children in Chad. In particular, the efforts exerted by the Government of Chad and the political will it has shown in addressing the issue of recruitment and use of children are acknowledged. These efforts culminated in the organization of a regional conference to end the recruitment and use of children, as well as the hosting by the Government of Chad of the first meeting of the monitoring committee to follow up on the N'Djamena Declaration, which was adopted at the conference.

Finally, the report notes the existing challenges in addressing the grave violations against children, as well as challenges likely to result upon the complete withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) on 31 December 2010. The report contains a series of recommendations aimed at securing strengthened action for the protection of children in Chad.

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009). It covers the period from July 2008 to December 2010, and is my third report on the situation of children in Chad. The report focuses on grave violations perpetrated against children and provides information on measures undertaken to strengthen the monitoring and reporting mechanism in Chad. It describes progress made to end all violations and abuses against children, as follow-up to the recommendations contained in my previous reports (S/2007/400 and S/2008/532) and the conclusions of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (S/AC.51/2007/16 and S/AC.51/2008/15).

2. Information in the report has been gathered, verified and compiled by the country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting in Chad.

II. Political and security developments in Chad

3. From the beginning of the reporting period until mid-2009, the overall political, military and security situation in Chad remained volatile and unpredictable owing to continued hostilities between the Government forces and armed opposition groups, intercommunal tension, as well as incidents of banditry, armed robbery and crime targeting national and international humanitarian staff, and this had a considerable impact on humanitarian activities. However, in the latter half of 2009 the security situation in eastern Chad improved, owing in part to the rainy season, which hampered road movements, halted cross-border incursions and contributed to a significant decline in banditry and other security incidents.

4. While the nature and extent of attacks on humanitarian actors in 2009 adversely impacted the smooth delivery of humanitarian assistance to needy communities, including children, in 2010, there has been slow but progressive improvement in the general security situation. The level and extent of attacks in 2010, while unacceptable, have not been as high as 2009. In addition, according to assessments by humanitarian actors and Government authorities, the overall security situation in refugee camps and internally displaced persons sites has remained relatively calm.

5. Following the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1923 (2010) and the withdrawal of MINURCAT in December 2010, the Government of Chad has assumed responsibility for the security of civilians and humanitarian workers. The Government has continued to implement its plan to ensure the security and the protection of civilians in eastern Chad, which involves national army garrisons along the border and the joint Chad-Sudan border monitoring force; the territorial gendarmerie with the Garde nationale et nomade du Tchad and the joint disarmament force; and at the core, the Détachement intégré de sécurité. A Joint Government/United Nations high-level working group was also established to facilitate the transition with the departure of MINURCAT, and a humanitarian forum was created to foster a dialogue on the protection of civilians and other humanitarian issues, among all stakeholders.

6. After the May 2009 attacks in Am Dam (Sila region), when a coalition of Chadian armed opposition groups, the Union des forces de la résistance (UFR), lost

a significant number of combatants, including children, several members responded to President Déby's call to join Government forces. On 25 July 2009, the Government of Chad and the Mouvement national (MN), a coalition of three Chadian armed groups, signed a peace agreement in Tripoli. Following the signing, a number of combatants associated with MN relinquished their arms, returned to Chad and integrated into Government forces. Some members of these and other armed groups, including 133 children in 2009 and 26 children in 2010, deserted and returned to Chad. Mahmout Nahor N'gawara of the Front démocratique populaire (FDP) also returned to Chad from the Sudan, where he had been active in the armed opposition against the Government of Chad. Furthermore, as a result of mediation efforts by the former President of Chad, Goukouni Weddeye, the Government of Chad signed a peace accord in May 2010 with the armed opposition group Mouvement pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad (MDJT). To date, the UFR coalition has not signed a peace agreement with the Government.

7. On 28 April 2010, the Government of Chad reported that it had clashed with Chadian rebels of the Front populaire pour la renaissance nationale (FPRN), a Chad-based armed opposition group, between 24 and 28 April in the area of Tissiand Timassi (Dar Sila region), just north of the junction of the borders of Chad, the Sudan and the Central African Republic. Children were identified within the ranks of FPRN.

8. Progress was made in the implementation of the 13 August 2007 agreement between the Government and the political opposition. On 9 October 2010, the Independent National Electoral Commission adopted a revised consensual timetable for parliamentary, presidential and local elections, which are scheduled to take place on 13 February, 3 April and 26 June 2011, respectively.

9. During the reporting period, the Doha peace process between the Governments of Chad and the Sudan led to the signing of the Doha agreement on 3 May 2009. Although this agreement was not immediately implemented owing to clashes during the same month between Chadian Government forces and UFR in Am Dam, high-level contacts between the two countries continued. On 15 January 2010, in N'Djamena, both Governments signed an agreement to normalize bilateral relations, including, inter alia, through the creation of a 3,000-strong border force to prevent cross-border attacks, the prevention of armed opposition group activities in their territories, and working towards their disarmament. The exchange of visits by the Presidents of Chad and the Sudan in February and July 2010, as well as the expulsion of armed opposition leaders from the territories of both countries, boosted these efforts. Timane Erdimi, Adouma Hassaballah and Mahamat Nouri, three main leaders of the Chadian armed opposition groups based in Darfur, as well as the Secretary-General of UFR, Abakar Tollimi, were expelled from Khartoum in July 2010, while Khalil Ibrahim, the leader of the Sudanese armed opposition group, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), was banned from entering Chad in May 2010.

III. Grave violations against children

10. During the period under review, the country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting in Chad documented grave violations against children, including: recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups; killing and maiming of children, principally from unexploded ordnance; and sexual and gender-based

violence. In addition access to adequate humanitarian services was limited owing to attacks on humanitarians.

11. The displacement of families as a result of both the volatile security situation and the economic situation has resulted in the movement of children, within some areas in eastern Chad, as well as into the Sudan, in extremely vulnerable conditions, making them potential targets for exploitation, recruitment and trafficking. Several incidents of child abduction and trafficking for forced labour and commercial sexual exploitation purposes have been brought to the attention of the Task Force.

A. Recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups

12. Recruitment and use of children in eastern Chad by the Chadian National Army and armed groups, including JEM, was verified during the period under review. Both the national army and JEM were listed in the annexes of my last annual report on children and armed conflict (S/2010/181) for the recruitment and use of children. However, the Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting in Chad has not received any information on active recruitment among Central African Republic refugees in southern Chad. While most of the children recruited were between 14 and 17 years old, there were also recruitment cases involving children as young as 12 years old. Most recruited children were boys; nevertheless, the Task Force has documented recruitment of girls by armed groups such as MDJT.

1. Chadian National Army

13. The Government of Chad has, since July 2009, declared that there is no official policy to recruit children into its armed forces, and has claimed that children found in their forces originate from the Chadian armed opposition groups that had integrated into the Chadian National Army. However, during the reporting period, children continued to be associated with the national army. The Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting in Chad also documented some cases of active child recruitment by the national army.

14. Between January and December 2009, the Task Force verified a total of 49 cases of recruitment and use of children by the national army. Of these, 27 children were Sudanese refugees at the time of recruitment. In March 2009, for example, 15 refugee children were recruited by the national army. A 16-year-old boy from the Koubigou site for internally displaced persons (Goz Beida) was recruited by the national army on 3 January 2009. Financial incentives play an important role in luring children, including refugee children, to join the national army. The Task Force believes that, as at the end of December 2009, at least 18 refugee children still remained associated with the national army.

15. In 2010, the Task Force received information concerning four new cases of recruitment of Sudanese refugee children by the national army, which allegedly took place in north-eastern Chad. In addition, between May and August 2010, the Task Force observed the presence of children within national army forces in Adré, as well as within national army mobile brigades in the border areas of Goungour and Sawa, Assoungha Department.

16. In 2010, the Government of Chad stepped up efforts to address the recruitment of children by the national army. The Task Force noted that the number of cases of

child recruitment documented were isolated, and that they were carried out by low-level officers. In response, the Government, with the support of the Task Force, organized training sessions to build and reinforce the capacity and knowledge of low-level national army officers on child rights and child protection, in line with international norms and standards.

2. Justice and equality movement

17. In 2009, the Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting in Chad confirmed reports indicating that JEM had actively and persistently continued to recruit and use children in the course of the year. In total, 33 boys were confirmed to be associated with the armed group. In 2010, the Task Force was informed of the continued recruitment of Sudanese refugee children by JEM, which took place in north-eastern Chad. Though such information was often brought directly to the attention of local authorities, effective preventive mechanisms were not put in place, nor were perpetrators apprehended. Meanwhile, information received from and corroborated by various sources implicated local refugee leaders, who in some cases acted as facilitators in the recruitment process. For example, several refugee families in the Gaga camp (65 km from Abéché) reported that their children had been recruited by JEM with the help of local leaders in the camps.

18. Since May 2010, the Task Force has received no reports of new cases of recruitment by JEM. Correspondingly, the Task Force noted the reduced presence and visibility of JEM in the refugee camps in eastern Chad. The Task Force attributed this development to the deterrence provided by the Chad-Sudan joint border force combined with regular cordon and search exercises conducted by DIS in order to maintain the humanitarian and civilian character of the camps. Furthermore, the Task Force received information that between May and August 2010, at least 40 former child combatants reportedly returned to refugee camps, 21 to refugee camps in Guéréda, 17 to camps in Iriba and 2 to camps in Goz Beida.

3. Chadian armed opposition groups and other unidentified armed groups

19. Eighty-four children were identified among the UFR combatants captured by Government forces after the Am Dam battle of May 2009. They were released and handed over to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) by the Ministry of Social Action, National Solidarity and Family for psychosocial care and reintegration. Testimonies from children and adult *ralliés* (former Chadian armed opposition combatants who joined Government forces) suggest that the number of children who took part in the Am Dam battle was significantly higher than 84. There may also have been a high number of minors among the casualties on the battlefield, and children may remain in the ranks of UFR. Identification of minors is hampered by the fact that the majority of children do not have official birth records.

20. From June 2009 onwards, a massive process of voluntary defections from Chadian armed opposition groups began. Either individually or as a group, approximately 5,000 members of these groups, many from MN, a coalition composed of the Union des forces pour la démocratie et le développement rénové (UFDD-R), the Mouvement national pour le redressement (MNR) and the Front pour le salut de la république (FSR), but also other armed groups, joined Government forces. Among those who disarmed, a total of 155 children were identified, released and handed over by the Ministry of Social Action, National

Solidarity and Family to UNICEF for psychosocial care and reintegration. Among the 196 ex-combatants presented by MN alone, 92 were identified as children. However, only 32 of those children were certified as associated with the armed group. There are no more children associated with those groups.

21. Thirteen children associated with FPRN were captured by the Government during fighting in Tissi in April 2010. The children were detained at the Gendarmerie nationale prison in N'Djamena. The Task Force was allowed unimpeded access by the Government of Chad to the detainees in order to identify and separate the children. All 13 children were released on 10 August 2010.

22. Following the peace agreement signed in May 2010 between the Government of Chad and MDJT, 58 children, aged from 10 to 17 years, including 10 girls, were released by the armed group.

23. Between September and October 2010, the process of integration of Chadian armed opposition groups with the national army, which began in 2009, continued. Among the 500 former Union des forces pour le changement et la démocratie (UFCD) expelled from the Sudan and stationed at the Moussoro military training centre, 30 have been verified by the Task Force as under 18 years old. These 30 children have been demobilized and handed over to UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Action, National Solidarity and Family.

24. Additionally, 1,150 ex-combatants associated with FDP, including 94 women (of whom 3 are pregnant) and 19 children of the women combatants, have been stationed at the military instruction centre in Loumia since July 2010 following the signing of the peace agreement between FDP and the Government of Chad in December 2009.

B. Killing and maiming of children

25. One of three allegations of the killing in combat of a child recruited by JEM in June 2009 was corroborated by the Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting in Chad. No such allegations were recorded in 2010.

26. Contamination from explosive remnants of war continued to exist throughout Chad, including in and around the capital, N'Djamena. This threat increased after the clashes between Government forces and the Chadian armed opposition groups at the beginning of 2008. While the mine threat is relatively low in the former area of operations of MINURCAT, there are concerns over the presence of mines and unexploded ordnance in the northern part of the country (Borkou, Ennedi, and particularly Tibesti).

27. In 2009, 51 mine/explosive remnants of war casualties were reported in the Wadi Fira, Quaddai, Salamat and Sila regions of eastern Chad, of which 21 victims were killed and 30 injured. Children between 3 and 15 years old were the largest casualty group, with 15 boys killed and 24 boys and 2 girls injured. In the 17 incidents documented by MINURCAT from January to August 2010 in the four eastern regions, 2 children were killed and 12 injured. All victims were boys, and the majority had been herding cattle.

28. Access to the Tibesti region, an intensely mined area occupied by the armed group MDJT, was possible as a result of the peace agreement between the

Government of Chad and MDJT. Demining activities organized by the Government and its partners began during the reporting period. Awareness and mine education campaigns are planned for the first semester of 2011.

29. The population of Chad does not have the necessary awareness of mine issues and the prevalence of explosive remnants of war to prevent or decrease casualties. Victim surveillance systems are inadequate in all regions of Chad, and there is no nationwide mechanism for data collection on casualties caused by unexploded ordnance. Efforts are being made by the Government, through the Haut Conseil national de déminage and aid agencies to collate mine incident data, but such information remains sparse and sometimes inconsistent. The existing information indicates that the prevalence of mines and explosive remnants of war in Chad has been understated. With the departure of MINURCAT and termination of its mine and clearance of explosive remnants of war and road verification programmes, there is a serious risk that incidents of killing and maiming of children associated with explosive remnants of war may increase.

C. Rape and other grave sexual violence

30. Sexual and gender-based violence, encompassing rape, attempted rape, sexual harassment and exploitation, female genital mutilation, early and forced marriages, undesired/early pregnancies with associated mistreatment, as well as other gender-based violence against women and girls, continued to be a widespread phenomenon in Chad. Women and girls face these forms of sexual violence by unknown individuals, armed groups and the national army, and fellow refugees or internally displaced persons in camps. However, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that sexual violence against children is a systematic feature of the conflict in Chad. Underreporting, among other challenges, has meant that there is a lack of comprehensive data and information with regard to this violation in the context of conflict.

31. Two observations may be made from data collected on sexual and gender-based violence in Chad. First, there is a rising trend of reported sexual and gender-based violence cases among refugees, with 295 cases in 2006, 512 cases in 2007, 656 cases in 2008, 860 in 2009 and 563 by mid-year 2010. This may not necessarily indicate that cases of sexual and gender-based violence have increased, rather it may be a result of increased reporting due to sustained work on sexual and gender-based violence. This upward trend is reflected in data collected by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), MINURCAT and the Détachement intégré de sécurité. Second, it may reveal a behavioural change evidenced by survivors and their relatives volunteering to report cases. While underreporting remains a concern, particularly for rape or attempted rape cases, this trend may indicate growing trust in the protection mechanisms established by international actors, in close coordination with the communities, and in the Détachement intégré de sécurité.

32. Out of the 563 cases of sexual and gender-based violence among refugee women and girls recorded by UNHCR in the first semester of 2010, nearly 30 per cent of victims were children, including children as young as three years old. The majority of cases were of domestic violence, although gender-based assaults, female genital mutilation, early and forced marriages, rapes and attempted rapes, including

by members of the armed forces, were also documented. The Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting documented 13 rape cases involving children within the host population in 2009, while 2 cases have been documented during the reporting period in 2010, all reportedly perpetrated by members of the armed forces. All the victims were girls. A few cases are mentioned below to illustrate this phenomenon.

33. On 12 April 2010, a 7-year-old internally displaced girl from the Gourounkoun site was allegedly raped by a soldier of the national army. He was arrested and detained in the holding cell of the gendarmerie brigade in Goz Beida. A 16-year-old girl was raped on 19 January 2009 in Abéché by a member of the national army during an illegal weapons search operation. MINURCAT brought the case to the attention of the local authorities for follow-up. On 23 October 2009, MINURCAT was informed of a rape case that occurred in May 2009 in the Arkoum site for internally displaced persons (60 km south-west of Farchana) involving a 15-year-old internally displaced girl, who at the time of reporting the incident was five months pregnant. The alleged perpetrator, a gendarmerie officer, had not been arrested. On 14 February 2009 in Guéréda, a 16-year-old girl was raped by three armed men in military attire who were believed to be soldiers of the national army.

34. These cases illustrate the recurrent nature of sexual and gender-based violence, the extent to which some security and law enforcement officials are involved, and the apparent impunity with which sexual and gender-based violence is committed. It should nevertheless be noted that in most reported cases, the perpetrators were identified as civilians from the local, host and refugee communities. While some efforts are currently being made by the national authorities to address the challenges surrounding the prosecution of sexual crimes in the criminal justice system, impunity related to sexual and gender-based violence cases, particularly when the perpetrators are soldiers of the national army, remains a major concern.

D. Attacks on schools and hospitals

35. While the Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting has not received any reports on incidents relating to attacks on schools, one case of an occupation of a school was recorded. A primary school in Bardai, Tibesti region, northern Chad, traditionally a stronghold of MDJT, which is integrating into the national army, was occupied by 100 armed national army military elements when the school was closed for holidays. However, as a result of a request by the United Nations to the Chadian authorities, the soldiers vacated the building in August 2010.

E. Denial of humanitarian access and targeting of humanitarian personnel and assets

36. In 2009, 72 attacks and 11 attempted attacks were reported against humanitarian personnel and assets. In most cases, the attackers seized material assets, such as money, communications equipment and cars. However, some of the attacks, particularly those carried out in 2009, were more violent, in some instances involving the killing or kidnapping of humanitarian staff. The perpetrators are believed to be mainly armed bandits and members of armed opposition groups, who use or sell stolen items for the military campaigns against the Sudan or Chad. There were also reports alleging the involvement of elements of the national army and

individuals in national army military uniforms in attacks against humanitarians. These attacks often have a disrupting impact on the delivery of humanitarian assistance to children. Some examples are provided below.

37. On 7 November 2009, a national staff member of the international non-governmental organization (NGO) Solidarités international was killed north of Adré (Ouaddaï region), after six armed men in military attire opened fire at the vehicle in which he and his colleagues were travelling. Solidarités international withdrew from Adré as a result of the incident. On 9 November 2009, an international staff member of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was abducted by a group of armed men in Kawa, Assoungha Department. He was eventually released on 6 February 2010. As a result of these attacks, ICRC and five other NGOs temporarily suspended their operations in areas close to the Sudanese border, thus disrupting humanitarian assistance to at least 37,000 people, including children.

38. The severity of the insecurity faced by humanitarian actors was further highlighted as national institutions that collaborate with humanitarian organizations also became the target of attacks. For instance, on 24 October 2009, the head of the Commission nationale d'assistance aux réfugiés office in Guéréda was attacked by two armed men and killed, while he was with his driver about 8 km from the Kounoungou refugee camp. His vehicle was clearly marked with the Commission nationale d'assistance aux réfugiés and UNHCR logos. The driver was also wounded during the attack. On 28 October 2009, in Gaga, eight unidentified armed men carried out an attack against the Détachement intégré de sécurité post resulting in one Détachement intégré de sécurité officer suffering a gunshot wound and injuries to a MINURCAT contractor. Both victims were evacuated to Abéché. The Détachement intégré de sécurité post was also ransacked, and some weapons and communications equipment were reportedly stolen.

39. Humanitarian organizations working along the border areas east of Goz Beida and Farchana were occasionally affected by these security challenges. In many carjacking incidents, it was reported that the attackers drove away and crossed into the Sudan, highlighting the cross-border dimension of this security threat.

40. The situation changed, however, in 2010, with a significant decrease in the number of security incidents and attacks against humanitarian workers. This may be as a result of the confluence of three factors: the Détachement intégré de sécurité, with the support of MINURCAT, increasingly becoming more operational in providing escorts and being able to react relatively promptly; the creation of the Chad-Sudan joint border force and its deterrent effect; and lastly the fact that other security forces, including the national army and the gendarmerie, improved efforts to pursue and apprehend perpetrators. However, this decrease comes after a spate of serious security incidents in June, including carjackings, kidnappings and abductions. As a result, one international NGO decided to withdraw its international staff from eastern Chad, and three others partially suspended their operations.

41. Between January and December 2010, only 11 cases of attacks against humanitarians were reported. There were no fatalities. In most of the cases, vehicles were carjacked and later abandoned due to the intervention of the Détachement intégré de sécurité and other law enforcement agents. It has not been possible to confirm whether any incidents reported in 2010 indicate a cross-border dimension.

42. In order to continue protection for humanitarian operations in view of the withdrawal of MINURCAT, the Government created the Bureau de sécurisation et de mouvements in six different locations (Abéché, Bahai, Guéréda, Iriba, Koukou and Goz Beida) to provide additional security to the humanitarian actors. The Bureau de sécurisation et de mouvements, which are chaired at the regional level by local administrators, bring together humanitarian workers and relevant security and law enforcement agents, including the Détachement intégré de sécurité, with a view to harnessing the available human and material resources to effectively provide security to humanitarian staff and property.

IV. Follow-up to the conclusions of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

A. Dialogue with the Government of Chad and action plan to halt the recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups

43. The Government of Chad, through its Defence Adviser, has been engaged in discussions with the United Nations, on the development of an action plan to address the issue o child recruitment and use, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009). This process was held up from mid-2009 to the second half of 2010 owing to the replacement of the Defence Adviser, who also served as the focal point on this matter.

44. However in October 2010, in a meeting between the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Minister of Social Action, National Solidarity and Family, the Minister expressed the intention of the Government of Chad to prepare and implement an action plan as a matter of priority. In the absence of MINURCAT, UNICEF, as a co-chair of the Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting, has begun engaging with the Government towards this end. A meeting between the Government and the Task Force to discuss elements of the action plan, including the release of all possible remaining children associated with the national army, will be held on 19 January 2011. The removal of the national army from the annexes of my annual report on children and armed conflict is contingent upon full compliance with the implementation of the action plan on recruitment and use of children in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

B. Joint verification commission

45. Despite the absence of a formal action plan to date, the Government has been engaging in dialogue with the United Nations on measures to address the issue of the recruitment and use of children in the broader context of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts in Chad to release all children associated with armed forces and groups and facilitate their sustainable reintegration into communities and families. In October 2008, a Government-led task force, with participation from the United Nations and representatives of diplomatic missions in Chad, was established to conduct verification and sensitization visits to Government military training centres and sites. In August 2009, the Ministry of Defence issued orders to commanders of armed and security forces to grant access to military camps

to the United Nations and ICRC, with a view to verifying the presence of children and facilitating their release from the ranks of the national army.

46. In addition, the joint Government of Chad-UNICEF commission, set up following the visit of my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict in May 2008, continued verification missions to Government military sites. The main objectives of these joint visits were to verify the presence of minors in military sites, and when found, to facilitate their release from national army ranks, as well as to raise awareness on the issue of child recruitment.

47. The visits were led by Government officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Human Rights and Social Affairs, with participation of MINURCAT, United Nations agencies and funds and diplomatic missions in Chad. In 2009, such visits were conducted to military barracks and training centres, as well as to transit points for armed opposition groups who joined the armed forces, in Abéché, Koundoul, N'Djamena, Moussoro and Mongo in 2009. Additional visits were also undertaken to the headquarters of the Armée de terre, the gendarmerie nationale, the Garde nationale et nomade tchadienne and the Direction générale de sécurisation des services et institutions de l'Etat in N'Djamena. Access to the latter was a positive development, as this was not initially included in the sites earmarked for visits by the joint commission.

48. During these visits, one child at the headquarters of the Armée de terre was certified as underage. He was immediately withdrawn and handed over to UNICEF and placed in a transit and orientation centre in N'Djamena. At the military instruction centre of Koundoul, where young officers are trained, no children were found. In Moussoro, the leaders of the Chadian armed opposition groups identified 196 children among their ranks, of whom only 32 were confirmed by the joint commission as children who were associated with these groups. An additional 65 children from the ranks of the *ralliés* (former Chadian armed opposition combatants who joined Government forces) were later released and transferred to the transit and orientation centres in N'Djamena.

49. While MDJT and the Government of Chad were in the process of negotiating a peace agreement, a verification of child presence in the units of MDJT in Bardai, in the extreme north of Chad, was conducted by the Ministry of Social Action, UNICEF and CARE International in June 2010. Fifty-eight children were identified, including 10 girls. Forty-three were returned to their families, while 15 others requiring psychosocial support were transferred to the transit and counselling centre managed by CARE International in N'Djamena.

50. Since January 2009, with the support of UNICEF, 413 children from armed forces and groups assisted in the transit centre run by CARE International in N'Djamena have been reunited with their families in eastern Chad, mainly in the towns of Biltine, Guéréda, Adré, N'Djamena, Mongo, Am Timan and Abéché.

51. Initially, as part of the incentive for disarming, demobilizing and integrating into the national forces, the Government had promised 400,000 FCFA (approximately $900) in cash to each of the *ralliés*, including children. Cash payments for the children was a serious issue of concern, as reports suggest that children had either returned to the Centre d'instruction militaire or rejoined the armed group in order to receive the payment again. A number of children also left the centre after receiving cash payments without the Ministry of Social Action, National Solidarity and

Family or UNICEF being informed of their departure. Further, the joint commission noted that children from neighbouring villages had joined the "rallying" groups when they were making their way to the military instruction centre to receive the money they were promised. Following several requests from UNICEF, including to the Prime Minister, the National Mediator stopped these payments. However, cash disbursements to children were observed during the release of children in Bardai and N'Djamena in September and December 2010 respectively.

52. The joint visits have proven very useful in creating awareness among military officers on the issue of recruitment and use of children. Though few children were identified and released from national army ranks, at least 5,000 military officers have been sensitized to the issue by their highest authorities. The visits have also prompted the Government to reiterate and reinforce its commitment to ending the recruitment and use of children.

C. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

53. During the reporting period, 413 children (240 in 2009 and 173 in 2010) left armed forces and groups through formal and informal channels. The majority originated from the factions that joined Government forces following the signature of several peace agreements with armed groups, including: Front pour le salut de la République (FSR); Front uni pour le changement (FUC); Mouvement national pour le redressement (MNR); Rassemblement des forces pour le changement (RFC); Conseil démocratique révolutionnaire (CDR); Union des forces de la résistance (UFR); Union des forces pour le développement et la démocratie (UFDD); Union des forces pour le changement et la démocratie (UFCD); Front populaire pour la renaissance nationale (FPRN); and Mouvement pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad (MDJT).

54. Over the course of 2010, reports were received that at least 4 refugee children spontaneously left the national army, while 21 others, who were formerly associated with JEM, returned to their families in Sudanese refugee camps in eastern Chad. In late October, the Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting conducted a mission to the camps to verify these reports. Thirty-five children previously associated with JEM and the national army (10 children in Kounoungou, 7 children in Mile, 2 children in Touloum, 9 children in Am Nabak, and 7 children in Iridimi) were identified and placed in the transitional care and rehabilitation programme. To reduce the risk that children who have returned to camps will be re-recruited, UNHCR has conducted regular visits to monitor their reintegration. UNHCR, through its education programmes for refugee children, assured that every child has access to primary education in all the refugee camps. In order to discourage remobilization, UNHCR monitored each demobilized child through regular house visits and encouraged each child to engage in recreational or social activities, to undertake vocational training or to return to school.

55. In collaboration with UNICEF, the international NGO Jesuit Refugee Services investigated the case of girls associated with armed groups in the area of Guéréda, mentioned in my last report. The investigations revealed that there were 25 females associated with armed groups, of whom 15 were under the age of 18. They did not undergo formal demobilization and were reintegrated into their families and communities.

56. Reintegration support has been provided for 281 children. A total of 238 were enrolled in schools (204 for the academic year 2008-2009 and 34 in 2009-2010). Almost half of those who participated in the reintegration programme (60 students aged 14 to 18 years) have completed various life skills training programmes. Twenty-two of the training programme graduates were hired by their trainers and 30 others have started income-generating activities. Children formally associated with armed groups who are over the age of 15 have been given the opportunity to start an income-generating activity while pursuing their studies; this has proven to be an important strategy in addressing the economic motivations for recruitment into armed forces and groups.

D. Regional conference to end the recruitment and use of children

57. The Government of Chad organized a regional conference on ending recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups: contributing to peace, justice and development, in N'Djamena from 7 to 9 June 2010. The regional conference brought together representatives of the Governments of Chad, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Niger, Nigeria and the Sudan. The conference was also attended by about 220 participants, including delegates from Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, specialists from various United Nations entities, international and national NGOs, Chadian ministries and national institutions, several diplomatic missions accredited to Chad, as well as former child soldiers from Chad, Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Sudan. Participants discussed factors leading to the involvement of children in armed forces and armed groups in the region; good practices in efforts to prevent vulnerability of children to recruitment; as well as good practices in demobilization and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups. In addition, participants focused on ways of strengthening cross-border coordination on monitoring, reporting and response to child recruitment. The conference culminated in the signing of the N'Djamena Declaration, by which participants committed, inter alia, to end the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups, to establish a strategy to fight arms proliferation, to implement relevant regional and international instruments on child rights and child protection, and to harmonize national legislation accordingly. A special follow-up committee comprising representatives of the signatory States was established to ensure implementation of the Declaration.

58. On 2 and 3 August 2010, the Government of Chad hosted experts from the signatory States of the N'Djamena Declaration for a follow-up meeting on ending the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups. During this meeting, experts from five of the signatory States, excluding Cameroon, developed a plan of action to implement the Declaration. UNICEF, UNHCR and MINURCAT provided technical assistance. On 26 and 27 October, a second meeting of the follow-up committee took place in Bangui, Central African Republic, providing the opportunity to discuss the implementation of the plan of action, as well as to identify strategies for advocacy with national authorities on the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and the establishment of a mechanism to monitor and share information on child rights violations.

E. Follow-up activities and programme response to violations against children

59. UNICEF, through its programme on children associated with armed forces or groups, has taken the lead in creating an environment that promotes child protection in conflict-affected areas in the country. Technical assistance has been provided to ensure the efficient functioning of the cross-sectoral national committee mandated to implement the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (the Paris Principles) adopted by the International Conference on Children involved in Armed Forces and Armed Groups: Free Children from War on 6 February 2007. In addition, work is under way to develop a national framework for a programme to prevent children from joining armed groups. Advocacy campaigns seek to create awareness of opportunities available to children under community-based reintegration programmes. The UNICEF programme will benefit all children released from armed forces and groups, and an additional 20,000 other vulnerable children in the conflict-affected areas.

60. UNHCR organizes regular sensitization sessions on the illegality and the adverse effects of child recruitment in the camps, targeting not only the refugee children themselves, but also their parents, traditional leaders, the communities at large and local authorities. UNHCR has also supported structured activities for teenagers in the camps, including improved access to primary and secondary school, vocational training opportunities, and income-generating activities (for children above 15 years of age). These activities have proven instrumental to the prevention of recruitment.

61. The Government's recent efforts to prevent sexual violence include a national campaign on violence against women, which ended in December 2010. On 17 October 2009, a campaign to end violence against women was launched and presided over by the First Lady of Chad. The campaign, which is part of a worldwide initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General, aimed, inter alia, at the adoption and enforcement of national legislation in line with international human rights standards, the establishment of national and/or local awareness-raising campaigns, and the implementation of systematic efforts to address sexual violence in conflict situations.

62. UNICEF, in collaboration with Handicap International, has developed promotional materials, and, together with the Haut Commissariat national au déminage, organized two sensitization campaigns in the Tibesti and Borkou regions where MDJT was operating. It is worth mentioning that in 2008, UNICEF provided assistance in the development of a programme on education on the risks of mines, which has been included in the curricula of primary schools, and has trained 3,700 teachers. In 2009, all pupils in N'Djamena received training within this programme, which is expected to be scaled up in the 2010-2011 academic year.

63. In the context of protecting children affected by armed conflict against recruitment, risks related to mines and explosive remnants of war, and sexual abuse, 7,800 children participated in recreational and psychosocial activities in child-friendly spaces established in eight refugee camps and host villages in Iriba, Guéréda and Farchana, as well as in 13 internally displaced persons sites in the Dar Sila region.

V. Monitoring and reporting mechanism following the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad

64. The departure of MINURCAT from eastern Chad will likely have a negative impact on the security situation, potentially increasing the threat of violations against children. In addition, the ability of the United Nations to implement the provisions of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) will probably be negatively impacted, given the Mission's important role in the monitoring and reporting mechanism, and the critical contribution of its resources to the task of monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children. With the withdrawal of the Mission, the capacity of the United Nations system and national partners to monitor, report and respond to violations will decline significantly, particularly in terms of geographical and substantial coverage. There are also concerns that, owing to the lack of continuous physical monitoring by the Mission, which has a deterrent effect, the number of reported cases and incidents of child recruitment and other grave violations against children may increase. The northern corridor of eastern Chad, including Iriba, Tine, Bahai, Oure Cassoni and Am Jaras are likely to remain areas of concern, given the continued reported presence of JEM, whose forces have been linked to the recruitment of large numbers of children.

65. As part of the completion and transfer of key MINURCAT activities to the United Nations country team, it is essential that the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009), continue under the leadership of the resident coordinator and the UNICEF representative in order to ensure the fulfilment of reporting obligations to the Security Council, as well as to follow up on the implementation of my recommendations and the conclusions of the Security Council Working Group, in particular on the action plan with the Government of Chad. The United Nations country team is currently in the process of developing a protection of civilians strategy in support of the Government of Chad, and it is important that child protection be a key feature of this strategy. The Government of Chad has increasingly demonstrated genuine commitment to the issue of child recruitment and is strongly encouraged to draw upon the monitoring and reporting process as a tool to put in place appropriate measures to prevent, respond to and address impunity. Its efforts should continue to be supported by the United Nations country team.

VI. Recommendations

66. At the outset, I reiterate the recommendations of my two previous reports on the situation of children and armed conflict in Chad (S/2007/400, S/2008/532). I also urge the immediate implementation by all parties of subsequent conclusions of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict in Chad (S/AC.51/2007/16, S/AC.51/2008/15).

67. I commend the efforts of the Government to address the recruitment and use of children by its armed forces, including newly integrated elements. Nevertheless, I am concerned by the slow progress in the dialogue towards the action plan to halt the recruitment and use of children, and, in this connection, urge it to engage, as a

matter of immediate priority, in dialogue with the United Nations to finalize the preparation and implementation of a concrete time-bound action plan in line with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009).

68. The Government of Chad should issue clear orders to its military chain of command, including at the local level, prohibiting the recruitment and use of children in line with its obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law, and ensuring the immediate and unconditional release of all children.

69. The Government of Chad must make every effort to ensure that children's rights are respected by all armed groups present in its territory and to continue to facilitate, by all means necessary, unhindered access for United Nations actors to all military centres and camps, particularly Moussoro, for the identification and release of children from these groups.

70. I am deeply concerned with the continued incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence, including those perpetrated by members of the armed forces. I strongly encourage the Government to prioritize the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of rape and other crimes of sexual violence, and to strengthen prevention and response strategies.

71. Finally, all opposition armed groups must stop using anti-personnel mines, which cause the death and maiming of children. I also appeal to the Government to ensure that humanitarian demining programmes are in line with international standards, that appropriate attention is afforded to child victims and that mine-risk education programmes are in place.

72. I am encouraged by the measures put in place by the Chadian authorities to ensure the increased security and protection of civilian populations in and around refugee camps and internally displaced persons sites. This has resulted in a diminishing number of child recruitment incidents; and the Government should, through the Détachement intégré de sécurité, maintain its security deployment in these sites. The Government should also take immediate steps towards the ratification of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

73. In the light of the withdrawal of MINURCAT, I encourage the donor community to provide support to the Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting in order to maintain, to the extent possible, the Mission's previous monitoring and reporting coverage. I also appeal to the donor community to provide additional support to the programmatic interventions of national authorities, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and non-governmental organizations.